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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on school-level differences and their implications for educational policy reform. It presents studies of two distinct educational reforms--a local community-based collaborative-services initiative and a state educational-accountability program--to illustrate important organizational features that vary across school levels. Both reforms are examined in light of the organizational features of schools attempting to implement the changes. Although the two reforms are distinct from each other, both suggest possible organizational explanations for differential reform implementation by grade level. The report is based on two studies--one a qualitative study, the other a large-scale survey--that explore the unique features of elementary, middle, and high schools in the face of reform implementation. The data included interviews with over 30 personnel from schools, social services and public health and law-enforcement agencies, and observations from governance committee meetings, school-team meetings, and community-based services meetings. Schools that successfully adopt the reforms share some common characteristics that relate to organizational culture and structure. Reform was much more successfully implemented in elementary schools, and results suggest that it is because they are more tightly coupled organizations than secondary schools. (Contains 18 references.) (RJM)

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ALIGNING ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES AND SCHOOL REFORM AN EXAMINATION OF TWO RECENT REFORMS

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ALIGNING ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES AND SCHOOL REFORM: AN EXAMINATION OF TWO RECENT REFORMS

INTRODUCTION

Schools have been simultaneously cast as "all alike" and resistant to change (Tyack, 1974), and as unique contexts which adapt change to local organizational needs (McLaughlin, 1987). For the most part, policymakers have taken the former view, often failing to recognize potentially important differences in schools when designing educational reform policies. Yet, a significant number of empirical studies of school organizations have found potentially important implications for policy design. This paper focuses on differences related to school level, and their implications for educational policy reform. First, studies of two distinct educational reforms -- a local community-based collaborative services initiative and a state educational accountability program -- are presented to illustrate important organizational features that vary across school level. While the two reforms examined here are distinct from one another, both suggest possible organizational explanations for differential reform implementation by grade level. Second, policy implications of these organizational features vis-a-vis school reforms are explored.

RELATED LITERATURE

In this study, characteristics of two different reform initiatives--a local community-based collaborative services initiative, and a state accountability program-- are examined in light of the organizational features of schools attempting to implement the changes. This study examines the organizational requirements made of schools as they implement the two different reform initiatives, and it examines some similarities in the ability or failure of schools

to adapt to the requirements of these initiatives. The data from these two reform initiatives are supported by organizational theory and educational research which suggest that there are potentially important differences in schools that can be predicted with some regularity.

In the context of reform implementation, it is important to underscore the nature of schools as organizations, and the fact that the more loosely coupled the school structure, authority, and outcomes are from staff activities and capacity, the less likely implementation of reform will occur (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977, Gamoran and Dreeben, 1986, McLaughlin, 1987).

Organizational theory on the differences between elementary and secondary schools point to the fact that school level differences not only account for organizational complexity, but for culture and function as well. Organizational features vary in important ways by school level (Firestone and Herriott, 1980, 1982), size (Richmond, 1992, Swanson, 1988), and organizational structure (Gamoran and Dreeben, 1986, Louis, Marks, Kruse, 1996).

The broad and uniform characterization of schools as loosely coupled and weakly controlled organizations is challenged somewhat by studies that have disentangled organizational control by school level, structure and culture. Firestone and Herriott (1980, 1982, 1984) found in three separate studies that elementary and high schools differ radically in their coupling between organizational authority and staff activity. Elementary schools tend to be formal hierarchies and tightly bound to authority, whereas high schools tend to be more autonomous and loosely coupled from authority.

Other school organization scholars have made similar findings. Louis, Marks and Kruse (1996) include size and staffing complexity as part of the definition of school structural

features. The more complex the staffing patterns, the more loose the professional linkages within the organization. This observation is confirmed by observations made by Charters (1967) that the more specialized and departmentalized the organization, the less communication and interaction among staff. Other school organization theorists argue that loose professional linkages within an organization are due to staffing complexity (Hoy and Miskel, 1987; Siskin, 1994).

The differences in school levels are not only a matter of size and organizational complexity, but of culture and function as well (Louis, Marks and Kruse, 1996; Hoy and Miskel, 1987). Elementary schools have greater goals consensus (Purkey and Smith, 1983), and in the absence of subject matter experts, the elementary teachers share more tasks within the school (Hoy, Tartar and Kottkamp, 1991). In the secondary schools, subject matter affiliation is strong which requires more administrative functions, thus limiting teacher participation in the larger school. Elementary school staff tend to share a holistic view of the student-as-child providing parent-like relationships and nurturance, whereas secondary school staff are likely to have a "nonarticulated" view of students (Louis, et al., 1996). School level also has been associated with variables such as ease in implementing changes (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977).

Policy implementation scholars have made similar observations to that of school organization theorists, taking into consideration the role played by the organizational structure and governance in the implementation of public policies (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983; Van Horn & Van Meter, 1975). These observations make an important connection between the nature of an organization and the likelihood for reform implementation.

In a significant policy implementation study, the Rand Change Agent Study, Berman and McLaughlin (1977, and later McLaughlin, 1987) noted that in a loosely-coupled setting, autonomy allows educators to either ignore or modify reforms or innovations to fit into their isolated activities. Furthermore, autonomy leads to isolation which can lead to a lack of understanding of implementation goals and purposes. And, if the purposes and goals of an innovation or program are not clear, argued Berman and McLaughlin (1977), teachers are ill-prepared to make connections to their class activities (see also Rosenholtz, 1987). The converse of this would mean, of course, that if educators are not working in isolation or are not decoupled from administrative leadership, successful implementation is more likely.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODS

What follows is a presentation of data from implementation studies of two distinct reform initiatives --one focused on equity, the other on excellence, one a qualitative study, the other a large-scale survey. By focusing on the school-level differences that emerged in these studies, combined with previous findings on school-level differences in the literature, we attempt to shed some additional light on the unique features of elementary, middle, and high schools in the face of reform implementation.

First, we examine findings of a community-based collaborative services study which was conducted over a three-year period, from 1994 to 1997. The study examined the implementation of a county-wide collaborative services initiative in four schools and two neighborhoods in a mid-size metropolitan area. The data included interviews with over 30 personnel from schools, social services, public health and law enforcement, and observations from governance committee meetings, school team meetings and

community-based services meetings. A significant finding was that the reform was much more successfully implemented in the elementary school than in the secondary schools. In these schools, the organizing structures and culture of the elementary school were more compatible with the reform objectives.

Then, we compare the findings from this study to a second reform initiative --the implementation of a school-based performance award and sanctions program which was part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. The Kentucky Accountability program provided rewards for schools that successfully improve student performance on a state assessment, and sanctions to schools whose performance declined, or failed to improve over time. In the course of 6 years, the program has shown mixed success in schools, with elementary schools showing the greatest ability to improve performance, and high schools showing the weakest performance gains. Data are analyzed from a survey of 1192 teachers regarding their perceptions of the accountability program and the organizational conditions thought to enable and impede program implementation.

Using the data from both studies, we examine the objectives of the two reforms, and the organizational contexts which were more and less successful in implementing the reforms, and find that there are some common characteristics of schools that successfully adopt the reforms that relate to organizational culture and structure of these schools. The data also suggest that schools are often distinguishable by level -- that is, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools often differ from one another in similar ways.

Community-Based Collaborative Services Initiative

The school-linked interagency collaborative effort, which we will refer to as Community-Based Collaboration for Families (hereafter, CBCF) was designed to restructure service delivery systems through collaboration among the school district, county human services, city public health and city police department. The idea of this collaborative was to integrate services at the neighborhood level in an effort to decentralize service bureaucracies and to coordinate a variety of children and family-focused agencies.

The school district was considered a key member of the initiative, but the allotment of power or authority to the district was symbolic. For example, the superintendent never attended a joint planning meeting -- even though other agencies sent top-level administrators. Erroneously, school building principals were left out of the design of CBCF because principals were viewed as middle managers [who] are part of the impermeable middle layer" (Field notes, December 1995). Rather than include principals in the effort, school social workers were designated as CBCF liaisons to the community. When interviewed, principals generally began the interview with an apology for not knowing more about CBCF. One principal stated unequivocally, "I probably won't know very much" (Interview notes, November 1995).

At the same time, many CBCF participants --including school personnel --viewed the collaboration between the school and the rest of the integrated services effort as problematic. As one member from the Department of Health and Human Services stated: "The schools have some problems . . . the role of the schools in this is crucial, but schools

are cumbersome" (Interview notes, June, 1993). Indeed, one of the school liaisons to CBCF stated that when the idea of collaboration was proposed, the "school was dragged in kicking and screaming" (Field notes, February, 1994).

Woodview Elementary School

To understand the Woodview School's role in an integrated services effort such as CBCF, it is helpful to understand the organizational features of Woodview. These features say something about the school's capacity for reform implementation, specifically with regard to meeting pre-learning needs.

Woodview Elementary School is relatively small at 380 students. The school is fed primarily by one neighborhood, Riverview -the neighborhood in which Community-Based Collaboration for Families is located. Eighty-five percent of the students in this school are on free/reduced lunch. The racial composition of students, like the racial composition in the neighborhood is a mix of minorities and whites. The racial composition of the staff is primarily white and primarily female.

This elementary school is characterized by professional relationships that emanate from the central mission of the school—to support learning for the student by promoting the well-being of the whole person. Accordingly, the professional staff are arranged in a system that is most conducive for meeting the needs for student learning. The professional arrangement includes considerable "overlap" of the professional layers (teachers, student services and administrators).

An example of professional overlap (and tight coupling) is perhaps best seen through the school's well established mechanism of the Building Consultation Team, or

BCT as the staff refer to it. In the Building Consultation Team meetings which are held before the school day begins, the principal meets with the school social worker, nurse, psychologist, and guidance counselor. A variety of specialized teachers attend each week as well, including the Title I, Learning Disabled, Emotionally Disturbed, and Speech and Language teachers. Regular education classroom teachers are free to attend and to discuss students who are of particular concern to them.

Each week, the BCT meets to discuss students who teachers have brought to the team's attention. BCT meetings are an opportunity for a variety of school personnel to meet weekly for diagnostic assessments of students' behavior, attitudes and skills. It is during the BCT meetings that the school social worker, who serves as the liaison to CBCF in the Riverview neighborhood, shares relevant information from the weekly CBCF meetings—if the information contributes to the general diagnosis of a students' behavioral, performance or attendance issues. The school social worker's role as a link between the school and the Riverview community demonstrated the school's interorganizational capacity for external collaboration. As the school social worker stated

> We have been able to piece some things together [about kids]. Working separately, we may not have put the whole picture together. But, after sitting in on CBCF meetings and police briefings in the neighborhood, or learning from teachers in BCT meetings that some students are sexually promiscuous, for example, I well, all of us were able to understand the big picture on some of these kids. Their behavior in school is explained by the incest situation back at home" (Interview notes, December, 1996).

At Woodview Elementary School, the school works toward understanding and meeting the larger family issues of the person so that learning is promoted and supported for the student. Efficaciously connecting with an effort such as CBCF goes a long way in meeting the larger needs of the student as a person. The successful collaboration seems to hinge on a set of organizational conditions: the importance of the school working outside itself by connecting with families, and professional overlap that allows all school personnel to see the "big picture." Woodview is a tightly coupled organization in which the work of professional staff overlaps and linkages are established between the school and the community. Organizational conditions call for a process of sharing information and charting a process to address pre-learning conditions in order to get students to a place where they are ready to learn.

Blackmore Middle School

Blackmore Middle School is a small middle school by district standards. In the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years, there were slightly over 400 enrolled students making Blackmore the smallest middle school in the district. Like all middle schools in this city, Blackmore serves 6th, 7th and 8th grades. There is a staff of 56 professionals, 30 of whom are teachers, though not all of the teachers or staff are full time. The student to teacher ratio at Blackmore is 26 to 1 (District "Report Card," 1997).

Of the five or six neighborhoods that feed into Blackmore Middle School, at least three neighborhoods house concentrations of students who come from subsidized housing complexes. One of the three low-income neighborhoods is Vernon Circle -a second neighborhood in which a Community-Based Collaboration for Families office is located.

The majority of the students on free/reduced lunch and nearly all of the minority students at Blackmore are from the Vernon Circle neighborhood.

In many ways, Blackmore Middle School has the look and feel of an elementary school. It is a small and pleasant school, and staff relationships with students are outwardly friendly. The value orientation at Blackmore tends to reflect a "kid orientation," that is to say, an emphasis on the student as a person. As the principal noted:

> I think we've always had a kind of "kid focus" since I've been here. At team meetings, we talk about curriculum issues and such, but we also talk about things that are very evident in kids—the drastic changes in behavior or whatever. And, without breaching confidence, we give the teacher some insight into what their kids are dealing with, and I think that's just instrumental in the teacher being better able to serve the kid. (Interview notes, November 1995)

The principal, from observations, is a part of creating the kid focus. He greets students in the hallway by name. During a brainstorming session in which the student services staff was trying to think of a way to recognize students who had pulled their grade point average up, the principal was quick to say, "Let's ask the kids for some ideas" (field notes, October-December 1996).

Internal collaboration at Blackmore was clear to most staff as a measure of serving the student; students were the point of focus, and staff worked collaboratively in accordance with the focus. However, school staff were unclear as to how far their professional responsibilities extended outside of the school boundaries, in meeting the needs of the "whole child." Consequently, the role of CBCF was ambiguous at best,

isolated as a singular activity at worst. Blackmore placed a school social worker in the community as a part of their role in CBCF. In effect, this placement was too far out of the bounds of the school to the point where the school social worker felt "forgotten." As she stated, "A lot of the teachers aren't making the connection [with CBCF]. A lot of them have forgotten about me" (Interview notes, Apr. , 1996). The work of CBCF was not integral to the school's practices.

Field notes and interview notes with students from the Vernon Court neighborhood who attend Blackmore indicate that CBCF played a visible role in their lives and their families' lives. Of the nearly 100 children who were interviewed, well over half knew the members of the CBCF initiative personally --including the school social worker from Blackmore. The impact of CBCF in the neighborhood of Vernon Court was obvious by several measure. The impact of CBCF at Blackmore Middle was much less obvious.

From observations of and interviews with school professionals, it became evident that CBCF had made very little impact at Blackmore in terms of staff awareness and the professional arrangements of staff. As well, it was clear that CBCF had little-to-no impact on the processes and practices with which the school was familiar—the everyday actions and functions that were a part of the task of schooling. Even though CBCF was a prevention and intervention strategy for children and families, the approach at Blackmore Middle School --a small school with a value orientation that focused on the "whole child" -to embracing CBCF was compartmentalized within the hands of a few key staff member

Southview Middle School

Southview Middle School is fairly large at nearly 700 students. Over 30 percent of the students receive free/reduced lunch, although the principal stated that she doesn't believe that free/reduced lunch statistics tell "the whole story" about the high needs of the students at her school. Of the 95 staff members, only 10 are minorities. Approximately 20 percent of the student body population is minority. Of the minority students at Southview, most are from the Riverview neighborhood.

Southview is known in the district as an innovative middle school. It was organized into the "house" system over 20 years ago as a way to provide middle school students with continuity during the awkward adolescent period. The students stay with the same class of students and same teacher from 6th grade to 8th grade (Principal interview notes, January, 1997). The school is broken into six houses, and the two assistant principals are each assigned three houses as part of their administrative assignment. Administration has dubbed the two groups of houses as "duplexes." Student services personnel are also divided among the six houses. There are two social workers, two psychologists and two guidance counselors. Their "duplex" assignment evenly divides them into two student services teams of three. While the organizational design is meant to provide continuity for students, it effectively fragments the support staff and further isolates the teachers from working together. A guidance counselor in the middle school observed that the organization of the school reflects "a psycho-social dynamic that promotes competition and fragmentation. The organizational arrangement of this school

does not promote a more holistic and integrated approach to our work" (Field notes, November, 1996).

The organizational complexity of dividing the student services staff among the six houses certainly posed difficulties for the liaison assigned to CBCF. Again, one social worker from each school is assigned as liaison to CBCF. However, the social worker from Southview was assigned to only work with half of the school -her duplex of three houses. Any effort to create a bridge between CBCF and the remaining three houses needed to be accomplished through administrative meetings and through her social work counterpart, with whom she met only once a week. In fact, when I began my field study at Southview to examine CBCF, the student services personnel and one assistant principal could not identify for me, upon my asking, who the CBCF liaison was to Riverview. I assumed it would be one of the two social workers, but could not be sure. Rather than ask around further, I decided to observe meetings until I could discern who among the student services staff served as the CBCF liaison. By the semester's end, it was still not apparent, and I eventually learned by asking the principal.

Because of the lack of internal linkages, CBCF efforts were virtually invisible. In effect, rather than integrate CBCF into the functions of Southview Middle School, the school had managed to reformulate the initiative into a familiar arrangement that made sense for their purposes -the function of CBCF rested within the hands of one school member, and most of all contacts were made off the school premises. The presence of CBCF in the Southview Middle School is vague at best, misrepresented at worst. As one teacher said, "CBCF? Is that the suspension room out in the Riverview neighborhood?"

Lakeland High School

The high school, Lakeland, that serves the Riverview neighborhood is fed by six other racially and socio-economically diverse neighborhoods. Consequently, the racial and socio-economic composition of its student body population is diverse. The ratio of white to minority students was roughly 7 to 1. There are no minority full-time classroom teachers, and only one minority administrator.

In my efforts to gain access to the high school as a study site, I inquired with two assistant principals and two social workers as to where I would most likely observe the linkages between the CBCF initiative and the school. It proved very telling that administrators and student services staff could not easily identify a forum or mechanism that most revealed the established linkages. As if making guesses, various staff members provided different suggestions to me that proved fruitless venues for studying the CBCF linkage to the school. After some discussion with the principal and the lead social worker, it was decided that I would attend the student services weekly meetings. The general picture of how the CBCF initiative fit in the school was vague among school staff, and its place within the school was understood differently depending on who I asked. This ambiguity seemed to indicate early on that CBCF did not have an integrative function in the school.

The role distinctions among the staff as reflected by the departmentalization within the school seemed to have implications for the successful coordination with CBCF. CBCF was not a widely-known initiative according to the principal, and accordingly, my efforts to find a reasonable link within the school for observational purposes proved difficult

The general picture of how the CBCF initiative fit in the school was vague among school staff, and its place within the school was understood differently depending on who I asked. The principal, in response to my query about how well CBCF was understood, said: "Quite honestly, not very." I asked how many teachers knew of CBCF. He said that "probably less than half" had heard of it. As a way to verify his impressions about teacher knowledge of CBCF, I specifically asked a teacher about CBCF who had been at the school for 13 years, and who had done volunteer work as a tutor at the Riverview Community Center for several years. I asked her if she knew of CBCF. She said it sounded "vaguely familiar," but she could not say exactly what it was.

One of the assistant principals bemoaned that fact that "collaboration within the school is rare." She added that "There are lots of departments in a high school. Even student services is departmentalized; it's not a blanket-wide facilitator for students" (Interview notes, December, 1996).

In an interview, the liaison to the neighborhood, the senior school social workers, voiced unequivocally that she felt "ambivalent" about CBCF, and she saw the integrated school-linked services effort as "irrelevant" to the larger function and purpose of the high school (Interview notes, November, 1996). Ambivalent feelings about the CBCF effort led to the eventual oversight of several crucial intervention and prevention strategies. One particular instance stands out in field notes.

> The school psychologist brought forward a file of a freshman from Riverview who was near failing in all of his classes. Upon opening his file, she read aloud to the group that the student had been assessed with Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome

(PTSS) in elementary school. After a significant pause in which no member of the student services team offered ideas for assistance or intervention, the CBCF-assigned social worker spoke up, "There are things going on at home," she stated (November, 1996).

Based on my observations at the CBCF meetings, I knew as much as the CBCF-assigned social worker: the student had a vision impairment that had gone untreated for years due to lack of insurance coverage; the student, his mother, and five siblings were on the verge of being evicted due to lack of sanitary conditions. What might have proved a productive problem-solving session among the school social worker, school psychologist, school nurse and counselors was passed over as an outdated file. The school psychologist, dropping the student's file on the floor as she spoke, called for a an updated PTSS assessment, and moved onto the next student's name. The school counselor assigned to the student (assignments are made alphabetically) asked me after the meeting if I knew the student since I had spent so much time at Riverview. I said I did, and she asked me to introduce him to her.

Collaboration between Lakeland High School and CBCF was nearly non-existent. Given the large size of the high school and the departmentalized nature of the organization, it is not surprising that an initiative such as CBCF had little impact. The departmentalized nature of the high school posed considerable challenges for the success of CBCF. The school social worker, as the school representative, was only one person from one department, and student services was only one department of a much larger

organization—and not a very integral department at that. Not unlike other role-specific identities, the school social worker assigned to CBCF identified closely with her professional role within the department of student services. The weakly controlled and loosely linked nature of the high school seemed to preclude successful collaboration between CBCF and the high school, and indeed, personal relationships the sizable student body of 1400. The impact of CBCF at Lakeland fell far short of meeting its objectives.

Summary

The four schools examined in the case studies represent different levels of involvement with the Community-Based Collaboration for Families initiative. By juxtaposing the four schools with one another through cross-case analysis, commonalities and differences among the schools become more evident. The Riverview CBCF team served three schools, yet all three schools understood and participated in CBCF differently. For contrast, two middle schools were compared --each served by two different CBCF teams. While the middle schools shared some organizational features, specific features of structure and culture differed enough to demonstrate different degrees of reform implementation. The middle school that shared more organizational features with that of an elementary school, Blackmore Middle, implemented CBCF to a greater extent than did the middle school, Southview, that shared organizational characteristics with a larger, more complex organization such as a high school. By understanding organizational differences, it is easier to see why the initiative was embraced to a greater or lesser degree by the participating schools.

As the grade level continuum moves from elementary, to middle to high school, the professional structures range from coordinated to compartmentalized and fragmented With greater complexity in role and function, the less the reform was implemented At the higher grade levels, staff become more differentiated by subject areas and service offerings, professional work grows more loosely linked, and internal staff collaboration becomes diffuse Coinciding with the structure, the school culture or value orientation moves from a larger view of the whole student to one in which the student becomes a part of a much larger organization with impersonal relationships with staff (see Table 1)

Insert Table 1 about here

The findings from these four case studies challenge, to some extent, the broad and uniform characterization of schools as loosely coupled and weakly controlled organizations The significance of school level differences is that the policy design of Community-Based Collaboration for Families assumed "one size fits all " From the four experiences of the schools studied here, the impact of CBCF, or the degree to which it was embraced as a reform initiative, varied considerably from school to school The overall impact on the promotion and support of student decreased as the school organization became more complex, most obviously by school level

Teacher Accountability for Improved Student Achievement in Kentucky

The Kentucky Accountability Program was implemented in 1993 as part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act The program held schools accountable for improvements in student performance on the state's assessment instrument (the Kentucky

Instructional Results Information System, or KIRIS).[1] The accountability program combined KIRIS results at the individual student and school levels with a non-cognitive component based on student attendance, dropout and retention rates, and transition to adult life. Beginning in 1992-93, the state set a series of 2-year goals for each school to increase its score 10% of the distance between the school's baseline score (initially the 1992-93 score, reset every biennium) and a common high standard for all schools. If schools exceeded their target, they were designated "reward" schools, and they received a pool of reward funds which were distributed by teachers for any purpose, including salary bonuses. In the first biennium, approximately 40% of schools exceeded their performance target and received performance awards, and teachers in over 98% of award schools voted to use all or part of the money for salary bonuses (Kentucky Department of Education, 1996; Reidy, 1995). Schools that increased their scores but fail to exceed the target were labeled "successful" or "improving," and schools whose scores dropped were labeled "decline" or "crisis." The state had varying levels of sanctions for improving, decline and crisis schools, ranging from submission of a school improvement plan to external assistance to school take-over.

Methodology

Sampling and Data Collection Procedures. The Consortium for Policy Research in Education conducted a survey of teachers in Kentucky schools in Fall, 1997. The

[1] A new accountability program is currently being developed that will replace KIRIS with a new state assessment, and will likely pay schools rewards in the form of school improvement funds. Teachers will no longer be able to opt to use the rewards as salary bonuses. The research reported here refers to the program as it was constituted in 1997.

survey focused on teacher perceptions of the award program and its effects, as well as information about teacher and school context (teacher knowledge and skills, teacher efficacy, level of professional community, site-based decision-making, resource alignment with program goals, principal leadership, etc.).

The survey questionnaire was administered to teachers selected by means of a multi-stage sampling process. First, schools were selected within strata based on five patterns of prior accountability status (e.g. reward both cycles, nonreward both cycles) and school level (high, middle or junior high, and elementary). There were a total of 15 strata. Within each strata, a random sample of 40 schools was chosen (or all the schools were chosen if there were 40 or fewer schools in the stratum). The total number of schools selected at this stage was 392. Because no single list of teacher names was available, districts or schools were contacted directly and asked to provide names of teachers. At this stage, districts or schools agreed to provide teacher names for 262 schools, with urban districts somewhat underrepresented. Within these schools, a random sample of 25 teachers was taken. If there were 25 or fewer teachers in a school, all teachers were included. The 5,654 teachers in the sample were sent questionnaires by mail in late October of 1997. The total number of useable responses received was 1,750, for a response rate, relative to the number of questionnaires sent, of 30.9%. At least one response was received from 261 of the 262 schools. (The estimated number of teachers who would have been sent questionnaires had all schools in the first stage sample provided names was 8,136.)

Only a very limited amount of information was available upon which to base a comparison of respondent demographic characteristics to characteristics of the teacher population. The distribution of respondents in high schools versus elementary and middle schools was close to the distribution reported in the Common Core of Data (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996*a*) for the 1994 school year. According to data obtained from the Kentucky Department of Education, the average annual teacher salary was $32,807 in 1997. The median pay level in our sample was in the $30,000 to $34,999 category. Because the sample was intended to over-represent some types of schools (e.g. Decline/Reward) relative to others (Nonreward both cycles), it likely contains more teachers from schools that achieved reward status in Cycle 2.

Instrumentation. The survey instrument was developed from qualitative research on the motivational impact of school-based performance award programs (Heneman, 1998; Kelley, 1998*a*; Kelley & Protsik, 1997), knowledge of expectancy and goal setting theories, and an examination of survey questions used in other research using similar constructs (e.g., Ashton & Webb, 1986; National Center for Education Statistics, 1996*b*; Porter & Smithson, 1997; Rosenholtz, 1991). Most factors were measured using multi-item scales.

Findings. For the purposes of this study, the data were divided by school level (elementary, middle, and high schools) and teacher responses were analyzed to determine differences that emerged in response patterns by school level. Our hypothesis was that there would be statistically significant differences in the responses from teachers in elementary versus secondary schools for some of the survey items. A number of

interesting patterns emerged in the data, although the differences were *not* statistically significant at commonly accepted levels. Nonetheless, the patterns in the data are consistent with other research on school level differences, and are presented in Table 2.

Items were selected if the difference between elementary and middle or high schools was greater than or equal to .1 on a 5-point likert scale, or greater than 3 on a 100-point, 10-item scale. As Table 2 shows, elementary school teachers were higher on colleague knowledge and skill, personal teaching efficacy/skill/expectancy, teacher decision-making, professional community, professional development and feedback, and greater likelihood of motivating outcomes associated with the accountability program. Middle school teachers were higher on low goal commitment and low personal teaching efficacy. High school teachers were higher on low teacher expectancy and goal conflict.

In essence, these data suggest that elementary schools are more tightly coupled organizations, with more highly skilled teachers who have more say in school operations, and strong professional communities. The Kentucky context is potentially very important here. The KERA reforms were heavily focused on reforming the elementary grades, including mandatory ungraded primary and site-based decision-making (for all school levels). These reforms may have provided a vehicle for the enhancement of professional community at the elementary level that was not available to middle and high school teachers. Nonetheless, the picture painted is one of stronger, more tightly coupled organization at the elementary level, and lower teacher efficacy and expectancy, and higher goal conflict at the middle and high school levels.

These data should not be interpreted as indicating that there was no professional community (for example) at the middle and high school levels, or that there was no goal conflict (for example) at the elementary school level. However, the data do suggest somewhat stronger, more coherent, organization at the elementary school level. In addition, the differences between school levels may be underestimated in these data, because the sample was drawn to include equal numbers of elementary, middle and high schools across award statuses. In fact, elementary schools were much more likely to achieve the goals of the accountability program, so the sampling technique oversamples low performing elementary schools and high performing middle and high schools. Additional analysis will be conducted to adjust for this sampling procedure. Once adjusted, the differences between elementary, middle and high schools would be expected to be enhanced.

Implications for Organizational Structure and Policy Design

The evidence from research on the community-based school-linked services collaborative and the Kentucky accountability reform support other research evidence that suggests that potentially important differences exist across school levels. These data sources suggest that elementary schools tend to be less complex (Herriott & Firestone), have higher levels of professional community (Louis, Marks & Kruse), higher levels of efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998), and the primary organizational unit is the whole school. In contrast, in high schools, important group allegiance tends to be to subgroups, such as departments.

The age of the student and the role of the school vis-a-vis that student group also has potentially important implications for reform. For example, elementary schools have been described as socializing agents in which the teacher-student relationship is similar to that of parent and child, while high schools serve an allocation and placement function, and tend to view the teacher-student relationship as that of producer and product (Louis, Marks & Kruse, 1996, Smithmier, 1998). The familial approach to elementary education may be more amenable to the development of professional collaboration or communities within schools, and to shared decision-making models. In secondary schools, the approach lends itself more to knowledge-based specialization, with much less of a need for school-wide community and culture.

It is interesting to note, however, that school level differences may reflect decisions about organizational structure unrelated to student age differences. For example, a study of teaching efficacy found that teachers in middle schools that were structured on a middle school model (which is somewhat more like the elementary model) had higher levels of efficacy than teachers in middle schools that were structured as junior high schools (on the high school model) (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

In the two reforms examined in this paper, it is apparent that school-level differences are related to the ability to embrace or implement educational reforms. Despite the fact that these were very different types of reforms, in both cases, elementary schools were much better able to implement or respond to the educational reform program. School level differences clearly affect the ability of organizations to adopt educational reforms. And yet educational policymakers continue to adopt policies that

ignore important school-level differences. From our research, we would suggest two approaches that might improve the likelihood that policy is adopted.

According to Fullan (1991), large, complex changes have often resulted in failure to implement reforms, while smaller changes may succeed but not make much difference to educational outcomes. Fullan suggests that policymakers might break complex changes down into smaller components that are more readily implemented. Our research suggests that complexity is a term that could be used to describe both the reform and the organization attempting to adopt it. A complex reform that meets a simple, tightly coupled organization can be more readily implemented than a complex reform that meets a complex, loosely coupled organization.

Successful implementation requires that teachers work together to clarify how a reform can fit into the existing organizational context (Fullan, 1991). Given the complex nature of secondary schools, and the ability to simultaneously embrace many diverse and potentially conflicting goals at the department or subgroup level of the organization, it seems that it would be much more difficult for high schools to engage in the process of localizing reforms, in other words, getting together with colleagues to work through the specifics of taking the reform and tailoring it to the local school context. In effect, at the high school level, there are many contexts, so the effort involves not just applying the reform to the local context (as it occurs at the elementary level), but negotiating what aspects of the reform should be adapted to what aspects of context, and negotiating how the various contexts connect with one another as well.

In order to do that, teachers must first grapple with clarifying the complexities of their own organization, which can be more difficult than overlaying the reform on that organizational "blueprint." Competing agendas engage micropolitical processes within the organization, and the battles over clarifying (or unifying) the internal organizational complexities are liable to overwhelm efforts to engage the reform, and struggle through how the reform fits into this complex loosely coupled web of diverse substructures and subcultures.

This suggests two approaches to enhancing the ability of schools to implement policy reforms. First, one approach to more effectively implementing policy at all levels would be to restructure schools themselves to simplify organizational structures, and provide formally structured time for integration and collaboration among teachers. Research suggests that it is possible to break out of the norm of the complex, fragmented structure of most high schools, and establish high schools cultures characterized by shared high expectations for student performance, collaboration, and strong principal leadership in support of teachers' work (Talbert, McLaughlin & Rowan, 1993). Administrators interested in implementing reforms could begin by examining organizational structure, and allowing staff time to grapple with internal organizational cohesion as part of the process of working through reform implementation. Newmann, King & Rigdon (1997) refer to this as the development of the organizational capacity of the school.

Second, policymakers could take into account important school-level differences when designing policies. Many authors have written about the importance of designing policies with attention to local context, but attention has not been paid to the ways that

policymakers might design policies differently for elementary, middle and high schools to take into account important school level organizational differences. Our research suggests that current approaches to policy design which emphasize whole-school reforms (e.g., Obey-Porter, Title 1 School-wide, and the kinds of accountability and equity reforms described above) and structure (organization-wide goals) are more amenable to adoption by elementary schools, and do not attend to important organizational features of high schools.

Policies might also be directed toward changing informal organization. Policies typically focus on changes to formal organization, such as adding personnel who can work with existing personnel to address particular policy goals, or establishing achievement targets, etc. These policies may be more effective at the elementary level, where the organization tends to be more tightly coupled and characterized by common goals and collaborative work environments. (The formal organization just works better here, so it makes sense to use that to implement policy goals.) In contrast, at the high school level formal organization tends to be loosely coupled and autonomous.

Therefore, at the high school level, it may make more sense to find ways to influence the informal organization than to use formal organization. One approach might be to allow for local identification of key personnel who can have more influence on the informal culture to implement policy. Another might be to use resources for culture-building activities that recognize and value the diverse contributions of teachers at the secondary level while identifying unifying themes across subcultures.

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Table 1. School Organizational Features by School Level

Organizational features	Woodview Elementary	Blackmore Middle	Southview Middle	Lakeland High
School culture/value orientation	Whole child	"Kid focus"	Member of complex organization	Impersonal relationship with school staff
Structure	Internal coordination/ Coordinated communication	Coordinated compartments/ Loosely-linked formal mechanisms	Fragmented and divided/ Ineffective communication/ meeting "overkill"	Departments and turfism/ disconnected practices
Link to CBCF	Coordinated and committed	Confounded boundaries, but committed	Misplaced and limited commitment	Limited-to-no commitment

Table 2. School-level differences emerging from the 1997 CPRE Kentucky Teacher Survey of Perceptions Regarding the Kentucky Accountability Program

Rated Highest by Elementary School Teachers

High knowledge and skill of school colleagues:
- Typical teacher strives to keep up
- Typical teacher ranks near top
- Typical teacher distinguished
- Teaching colleagues have motivation

High personal teaching efficacy skill:
- I know how to teach so students will do well
- I can get through to the most difficult student
- I change my approach

High teacher expectancy:
- KIRIS scores depend on effort

Teacher Decision-Making:
- Teachers make decisions about curriculum
- Teachers make decisions about budget
- Teacher make decisions about hiring
- Teachers are provided with information

Professional Community:
- Teachers seek the advice of other teachers
- Teachers discuss ideas
- Teachers share a vision
- Teachers hold one another accountable

Professional Development & Feedback:
- Teachers are evaluated on efforts to achieve goals
- Professional development efforts focus on helping achieve accountability goals

Desirable outcomes:
- Working cooperatively
- Opportunities for professional development

Intrinsic & Extrinsic Rewards Associated with trying to achieve accountability goals:
- Satisfaction of knowing performance improved
- Public recognition
- Personal satisfaction
- Feel you are working toward clear goals
- Seeing students learn new concepts
- New opportunities for professional development
- Receive a pay bonus
- Embarrassment from not achieving goals
- Loss of prof. pride from not achieving goals

Rated Highest by Middle School Teachers

Low goal commitment:
- Hard to take the accountability goals seriously

Low teacher efficacy

Teaching strategies have to improve
There is little I can do to achieve goals

Rated Highest by High School Teachers

Low teacher expectancy

It is unrealistic to expect school to achieve goals

Goal conflict

Working toward goals prevents achievement of other important goals
Working toward goals results in less freedom to teach things

*Items are included if the difference between elementary schools and middle or high schools is greater than or equal to .1 on a 5-point likert scale, or more than .3 on a 10-point scale